

FISH and WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

Meeting Date: February 15, 2018

Agenda Item: 2018-2019 Deer Hunting Seasons

Division: Wildlife

Action Needed: Final

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 30 Min

Background: Season structures and hunting district boundaries are adopted biennially for most game species. This happens every other year with final adoptions in February. Proposals are based on population status and/or other circumstances. **Changes from December proposals are highlighted.**

Deer populations in much of the state are recovering from lows of a few years ago and have grown to very high numbers in some parts of the state. For 2018 and 2019 we are proposing liberalizing seasons and adding B Licenses for both mule and white-tailed deer in many hunting districts. Some of the more substantial changes are:

Region 1 – A proposal from the public to make a portion of HD 103 a limited-draw area for mule deer bucks. FWP does not support this proposal.

Region 2 - HDs 212, 213, 215, 217 - Either-sex whitetail opportunity with a general license

HDs 270, 298 – Either-sex whitetail during the first nine days of the general season

HDs 210, 212, 213, 215, 216, 217 - Over-the-counter antlerless whitetail B licenses, up to 3 per hunter

HDs 210, 212, 213, 214, 215, 217 - Youth opportunities for antlerless mule deer

HDs 210, 217 – Add antlerless mule deer B licenses

Region 3 - Remove unlimited mule deer buck permits and go to an any buck season in HDs 318, 335, 339 or either-sex in HDs 329, 340 in accordance with population status and the Commission-approved FWP Adaptive Harvest Management Plan

Establish a sub-portion around Livingston with either-sex mule deer on the general license.

Region 4 - Add 004-00 Over-the-Counter Whitetail B-licenses valid during archery and general season for all districts except 455

Regions 4 & 5 – Establish permanent CWD Transport Restriction Zones

Region 6 - Add mule deer B licenses in HDs 600, 611, 641, 652, 621 and 622

Add 699-00 WT B License valid in all R6 HDs during archery and general seasons

These and all proposed changes are on the Deer Master List in the Commission packet.

Public Involvement Process & Results: Deer season comments were received during the Aug. 20 – Sept. 21 scoping and included interest in antlerless opportunities, access, and special muzzleloader and senior citizen seasons. Public comment ran from Dec. 7 through Jan. 24. We received 162 general comments about deer and 219 on the HD 103 proposal, plus an identical form letter from about 600 people in support of the HD 103 citizen proposal and a petition in opposition signed by 334.

Alternatives and Analysis: Proposals may be adopted as proposed, with adjustment, with additions, with deletions or no change from 2017 (status quo). No change would challenge the supporting justifications behind proposals.

Agency Recommendation & Rationale: FWP recommends the Commission adopt the proposed deer seasons and quota ranges except for the HD 103 mule deer limited permits.

Proposed Motion

I move the Fish and Wildlife Commission adopt the 2018 and 2019 Deer Hunting Seasons and quota ranges as presented by FWP except for the HD 103 mule deer limited permits, and that all other aspects of the deer season remain unchanged unless addressed in other proposals.